

“the law is irrelevant.” He called these matters “a distraction.” What does that say about a society that once prided itself on being a Nation of laws and not of men?

All around this Capitol, we are surrounded by the trappings of the Roman Republic. They serve as an inspiration, but they should also serve as a warning. The Roman Republic didn’t end because Caesar crossed the Rubicon with his legion. It was because that illegal act was not effectively resisted and led to another usurpation and then another and then another over a period of years. It was the accumulation of many such infringements that brought the inexorable decline of freedom and set the stage for Rome’s age of tyrants. That’s what Jefferson meant when he said the price of liberty is eternal vigilance.

My great fear, as we adjourn tomorrow to celebrate the 237th anniversary of American freedom, is that sometime between the barbecues and the fireworks we shrug off these profound developments and go about as if nothing has happened. The summer of 2013 has brought us to a crossroads, and I rise today to urge the House to give these events its full and undivided attention.

“REDSKIN” OFFENSIVE TO NATIVE AMERICANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, just yesterday on the cover page of The Washington Post newspaper, there was an article written by journalists Jon Cohen and Rick Maese that, according to a recent poll taken among the sports fans of the Washington, D.C. area:

A large majority of area sports fans say the Washington Redskins should not change the team name, even though most supporters of the nickname feel the word “redskin” is an inappropriate term for Native Americans.

Mr. Speaker, not only is the term “redskin” inappropriate, but it is just plain offensive and derogatory towards Native Americans. And I want to share with my colleagues in Congress, and especially the American people, how the word “redskin” came about and its history.

In 1749, it was a standard procedure among settlers who lived in what is now known as Maine and Nova Scotia to kill and scalp as many of the Indians as members of the Micmac Tribe. The same policy was also implemented in 1755 by settlers who lived in what is now known as the State of Massachusetts—that their object was to kill and scalp members of the Penobscot Indian Nation.

Mr. Speaker, the policy was you get paid for killing and/or scalping Native American Indians. And if you kill an Indian boy, you get paid 50 pounds. If you get a scalp of an Indian, you also get paid 40 pounds. For any female, Mr. Speaker, under 12 years old that you

killed or scalped, you also get paid 25 pounds. Mr. Speaker, I submit that these scalps were also called “redskins.” Mr. Speaker, this is why this word is so offensive to Native Americans.

Mr. Speaker, there’s a saying in Indian country: “Walk in a man’s moccasins for 2 weeks before you pass judgment on that person.”

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Mr. Speaker, my point is what if that scalp belonged to your mother or to your wife or daughter or your brother or sister or to your son or father? Mr. Speaker, it is my sincere hope that our Washington fans and the American public will come to realize why the usage of the word “redskin” has brought nothing but a stark reminder of the horrors of how Native Americans have been treated for centuries.

Mr. Speaker, I honestly believe in the fairness and decency of the American people. I believe that many of our fellow Americans did not know of the history of the word “redskin,” and I sincerely hope many others will come to a better understanding as to why Native Americans feel obviously offended by the use of the word.

I hope Mr. Roger Goodell, commissioner of the National Football League, and all the NFL club owners will seriously raise this matter with Mr. Dan Snyder to try to change the name of his Washington football franchise. The NFL has a moral responsibility to take corrective action on this matter. It is the right thing to do.

Under the mandate of the U.S. Constitution, Mr. Speaker, the U.S. Congress has both a legal and moral responsibility to look after the needs of our Native American nations. It is for this reason that the bill, H.R. 1278, was introduced to not allow or to cancel the registration of the word Redskins as a trademark name simply because it is a derogatory term and a racial slur against Native Americans.

Mr. Speaker, don’t get me wrong. I’m a great supporter and fan of the sport of football. In fact, I played 4 years of football in high school. Many of my relatives played both at the college level and in the NFL: the late Junior Seau of the San Diego Chargers; Troy Polamalu of the Pittsburgh Steelers; Jesse Sapolu of the 49ers, just to name a few. There are many others. My point, Mr. Speaker, is we need to correct this inequity. We need to show a little more respect for members of the Native American community.

[From the Washington Post, June 26, 2013]
WASHINGTON REDSKINS NAME: WASHINGTON POST POLL FINDS MOST D.C. AREA FANS SUPPORT IT

(By Jon Cohen and Rick Maese)

A large majority of area sports fans say the Washington Redskins should not change the team name, even though most supporters of the nickname feel the word “redskin” is an inappropriate term for Native Americans, according to a new Washington Post poll.

The debate over the team’s name has intensified in recent months as members of

Congress, activists and media commentators criticized it as offensive to Native Americans and lobbied for change. But most Washingtonians—61 percent—say they like the team’s name, and two-thirds say the team should not change it, according to the poll.

Among Redskins fans, about eight in 10 say the team should keep its name. Also, there’s some evidence that changing it might undermine support from some of the team’s most ardent backers.

“It’s been associated with the team for so long, I just don’t see any reason to change it now,” said retiree Joseph Braceland, 70. “It was not meant to be derogatory.”

A quarter of all area adults and slightly more than half of self-described Redskins fans say they “love” the team name, yet both groups overwhelmingly say that in general a new name wouldn’t make much difference to them.

Among those who want to keep the Redskins’ name, most—56 percent—say they feel the word “redskin” is inappropriate. Only half as many—28 percent—consider the term as an acceptable one to use.

“I think any word that you deal with, it depends on the context,” said Stephan Bachenheimer, a District resident who works for the World Bank and supports the Redskins’ name. “A lot of people have a hard time separating these issues.”

The name has been subject to much criticism and public debate this offseason, with both local and national leaders urging the team to consider a name change, a request the team has fervently resisted.

In the new poll, 28 percent of all Washingtonians say the team should change its name, far above the 11 percent nationally who said so in a recent Associated Press poll.

“I don’t believe in being super politically correct—I have a sense of humor—but I think this name came about at a time when there was very different awareness about the plight of the American Indians,” said Mary Falvey, 60, who works in communications for the Food and Drug Administration. “I just don’t think it’s appropriate. There’s increased sensitivity about race in this country today—for the good.”

While feelings about the team’s nickname were similar across most demographics, the percentage advocating a shift in the D.C. area peaks at 39 percent among African Americans with college degrees. (There weren’t enough Native Americans among the poll’s 1,106 respondents for meaningful comparison; Native Americans make up less than 1 percent of the population in the region, according to Census data.)

According to poll results, education plays a role more broadly: 34 percent of all area college graduates say change the name, compared with 21 percent of those with less formal education.

“Leave the name alone,” said Eileen Schilling, 52, who works in construction sales. “It’s ridiculous. It’s getting completely out of hand. Pretty soon we won’t be able to dye our hair because it might offend someone. I’m Irish. Should the Notre Dame Fighting Irish change their name because I don’t like it? Hell no. What about the Kansas City Chiefs? The Cleveland Indians? Should the Eagles change their names because it’s a national symbol? It’s ridiculous.”

PRESIDENT PANDERING TO ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the President this week declared he’s going